

REMARKS

In the June 18, 2007 Office Action, claim 2 and the drawings were objected to and claims 1-5 and 7-20 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claim 6 was withdrawn for being directed to a non-elected embodiment. Claims 10 and 11 also were rejected for failing to indicate and to claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the June 18, 2007 Office Action, Applicants have amended the specification and claims 1, 2, 10, and 17, respectfully traverse the rejections based on U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0019262, and have added claims 21 and 22, as indicated above. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the examination of this application. Thus, claims 1-22 are pending, with claims 1 and 17 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Interview Summary

On September 14, 2007, the undersigned conducted a telephonic interview with Examiner Johnson, who is in charge of the above-identified patent application, and Supervisory Examiner Fenstermacher. Applicants wish to thank Examiners Johnson and Fenstermacher for the opportunity to discuss the above-identified patent application during the Interview of September 14, 2007.

Election of Species

In item 1 of the Office Action, Applicants' election without traverse was acknowledged. Thus, non-elected claim 6 was withdrawn from further consideration. However, Applicants respectfully request that non-elected claim 6 be rejoined in this application upon allowance of a generic or linking claim, or claims.

Drawings

In item 2 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.83(a). Specifically, it was stated that the drawings did not show the support member contacting the inertia member. In response, Applicants have amended the specification, specifically claims 11 and 16. Applicants have amended paragraph [0026] to state that the annular member 14 forms an inertia member with the disk-like member 13. Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed arrangement is shown in the drawings. Specifically, as seen in Figure 1 of the present application, the support member 37 contacts the support plate 13.

Applicants respectfully assert that the aforementioned reference characters refer to an example in a preferred embodiment, and that it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the aforementioned description was provided for illustration only and not for the purpose of limiting the invention. Further, since this arrangement was originally claimed and described in paragraph [0020] of the written disclosure, Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter has been added. Applicants believe that the drawings comply with 37 CFR §1.83(a). Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

Claim Objection

In item 3 of the Office Action, claim 2 was objected to due to a typographical error. In response, Applicants have amended claim 2 to delete "a inner circumferential surface" with -- an inner circumferential surface --.

Applicants believe that the claim is now correct. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

In item 5 of the Office Action, claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended claim 10 to clarify claims 10 and 11.

Specifically, the dependency of claim 10 has been changed to depend upon claim 9 to provide antecedent basis. Applicants believe that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

In item 7 of the Office Action, claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0019262 (Suzuki et al.). In item 8 of the Office Action, it is believed that claims 1-5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 18, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0004956 (Jackel et al.). In response, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections based on Suzuki et al. and have amended claims 1 and 17.

Suzuki et al.

In particular, original independent claim 1 of the present application recites a damper mechanism that elastically connects the flywheel to an engine crankshaft. Further, original claim 1 recites that the support member is configured to support and to position the flywheel on the crankshaft in a radial direction.

The Office Action identifies the crankshaft as 2, the flywheel as 10, the damper mechanism as 20, and the support member as 25 in the Suzuki et al. reference. Referring to Figure 5 and paragraph [0035] of Suzuki et al., Applicants respectfully assert that the

flywheel 10 is non-rotatably fixed to the engine crankshaft 2 by at least one bolt. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the bolt or bolts prohibits an elastic connection between the flywheel 10 and crankshaft 2 via the damper mechanism 20 as claimed in the present application, thus, the flywheel 10 and crankshaft are not configured to be elastically connected by the damper mechanism 20. Further, Applicants respectfully assert that the support member 25 does not support and position the flywheel 10 as claimed because of the bolt. Moreover, Suzuki et al. expressly state paragraphs [0053] and [0054] that the support member 25 is provided to support and to position the drive plates 21 or the drive plate 22.

During the interview of September 14, 2007, it was asserted by Examiner Fenstermacher that the path of power disclosed by Suzuki et al. was from the crankshaft 2 to the spring dampers 24 to the flywheel 10. However, Applicants respectfully assert that the power path disclosed by Suzuki et al. is from the crankshaft 2 to the flywheel 10 to the damper assembly 20 to the input shaft 3 as stated in paragraph [0037] of Suzuki et al. and shown in the Figures. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that the flywheel 10 of Suzuki et al. is not elastically connected to the crankshaft 2 by the damper mechanism 20 as claimed.

Jackel et al. & Claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the support member is supported in the radial direction by an axially projecting protrusion of the crankshaft. Referring to Figure 2 of Jackel et al., Applicants respectfully assert that the support member 17 is not supported by a protrusion as claimed, and even further that Jackel et al. fail to disclose or to suggest a crankshaft protrusion.

During the interview of September 14, 2007, it was asserted by Examiner Fenstermacher that Jackel et al. discloses a crankshaft with an axial protrusion, and especially referred to Figure 17. Applicants respectfully assert that the written disclosure of Jackel et al.

with regards to the description of the crankshaft is silent with regards to this feature. Further, Applicants respectfully assert that the portion of the crankshaft that is shown in Figure 2 of Jackel et al. has a flat end face. Moreover, Applicants respectfully asserts that Figure 17 of Jackel et al. is similar to Figures 13 and 14 in that the crankshaft is not shown (See paragraph [0189] of Jackel et al.). Applicants respectfully assert that while drawings can be used as prior art, they "must show all the claimed structural features and how they are put together" (MPEP §2125). Applicant respectfully asserts that since Jackel et al. neither describe nor show this feature, claim 1 as now amended is not anticipated nor suggested by Jackel et al.

During the interview of September 14, 2007, Examiner Johnson made reference to other prior art, specifically U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0195047 (Suzuki et al.) and U.S. Patent No. 6,106,430 (Peinemann), as showing this feature. However, as seen in the figures of these references, Applicants respectfully assert these references fail to disclose or to suggest the presence and use of a support member as claimed.

Since the aforementioned Suzuki et al. and Peinemann references were brought to the attention of the Applicants by the Examiner, and since the Examiner believes these references to be relevant, especially in light of the amendment, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner officially make these references of record.

Jackel et al. & Claim 17

Claim 17 recites that the damper mechanism includes an input member attached to the crankshaft, and that the input member is independent of, separate from, and contacts the support member. On page 5 of the Office Action, it is stated that Jackel et al. disclose a damper mechanism 8 having an input member 20 that is attached to the crankshaft. Further, the Office Action refers to paragraphs [0083] and [0091] of Jackel et al. As seen in Figure 2 of Jackel et al., Applicants respectfully assert that Jackel et al. state that the input member 20

is attached to the flywheel 2 by rivets 33 in paragraph [0094] and does not disclose or suggest the input member 20 contacting the support member 17 as claimed.

Applicants respectfully assert that the recited structures are not disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record. It is well settled under U.S. patent law that for a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must disclose each element of the claim within the reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 17 are not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicants believe that the dependent claims are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 17, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claims 1 and 17, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In item 10 of the Office Action, claims 9-11, 14-16, and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0004956 (Jackel et al.). In response, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 17 as mentioned.

Applicants believe that Jackel et al. do not disclose or suggest the limitations of claim 1 and 17 for the aforementioned reasons.

Applicants respectfully assert that the aforementioned arrangement is not disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does not make the modification obvious, unless the prior art

suggests the desirability of the modification. Accordingly, the prior art of record lacks any suggestion or expectation of success for attaching a damper mechanism input member to the crankshaft to create the Applicants' unique arrangement of a flywheel assembly.

Moreover, Applicants believe that dependent claims 9-11, 14-16, and 19 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 17, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in independent claims 1 and 17, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

New Claims - 21 and 22

Applicants have added new claims 21 and 22, which depends on claims 1 and 17. Applicants believe that dependent claims 21 and 22 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 17, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims 21 and 22 are further allowable because they include additional limitations.

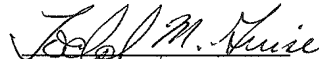
Examination and consideration are respectfully requested.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-22 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,


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